United Nations ST/IC/2009/27

Secretariat

30 July 2009

# Information circular*

To: Members of the staff at Headquarters

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2009 competitive examination for language reference assistants**

1. The written component of a competitive examination for language reference assistants will be held on **Friday, 9 October 2009**, at Headquarters in New York. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which future vacancies for language reference assistants at the G-7 level will be filled in the Terminology and Reference Section in the Documentation Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

2. The examination is open to staff members of the Secretariat at Headquarters in the General Service and related categories, in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/1998/4, entitled "Competitive examinations for the placement of General Service and related categories in particular occupational groups".

3. The main duties and responsibilities of language reference assistants are to carry out research in three official languages of the United Nations and provide support to translators to ensure accuracy, uniformity and timeliness in the translation of United Nations documents and publications by supplying the relevant language services with reference material and terminology information.

4. Staff members applying for the examination must:

(a) Have satisfactorily completed their secondary education;

(b) Have an excellent working knowledge of English and of two other official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish). Knowledge of additional official languages beyond the required three, as well as of other languages, will be an asset. For applicants with knowledge of Chinese the requirement of a third language is waived. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that applicants be able to support their claims of knowledge of these languages by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have enrolled in the United Nations Language and Communications

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2009.

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Programme must have passed the language proficiency examination in these languages. Those who have not pursued language courses at the United Nations must substantiate their claim of knowledge of these languages by attaching to their applications photocopies of diplomas or certificates from a language school or a brief explanation of how they acquired knowledge of the languages claimed. Applicants claiming one of these languages as their main language must be able to prove that it was the language of instruction at their secondary school;

(c) Have excellent skills in word-processing, desktop publishing, language-related information technology tools and database content maintenance.

5. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. All applicants will be notified of the decision of the Board with respect to their application. Decisions of the Board are final and are not subject to appeal.

6. The written examination will consist of three parts:

(a) Part I: Preparing United Nations documents in English and two other official languages of the United Nations to be chosen by the examinees from sets of document excerpts provided in the six official languages. Examinees will be required to identify and indicate the type of references to elements in these documents that should be verified and researched prior to translation. Examinees who have only knowledge of Chinese and English will select one English and two Chinese sets (3 hours).

(b) Part II: Writing an essay of approximately 250 words in English. Examinees will have a choice of two topics on a general United Nations-related subject (1 hour).

(c) Part III: Answering two sets of questions in two official languages other than English (i.e., Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish) on the mandates, structure and documentation of the United Nations system of organizations and major international issues of relevance to the United Nations. Examinees with knowledge of Chinese may answer both sets of questions in Chinese (1 hour).

The use of dictionaries or any other reference material is **not** permitted during the examination.

7. The computer component of the examination will be administered only to those examinees who have reached a satisfactory level on the written examination. Examinees will be asked to carry out searches and retrieve information using the Official Document System (ODS), Dag Hammarskjöld Library resources and the Internet (2 hours).

8. On the basis of the results of both the written and the computer components of the examination, the Board will invite selected examinees to a competency-based interview to assess their suitability to perform as language reference assistants. The interview is an integral part of the examination; therefore, examinees who are invited to an interview **should not** assume that they will be offered an assignment.

9. The Board of Examiners will review the overall results of the examination and recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the most suitable candidates for inclusion in the roster for language reference assistants. All candidates will be informed in writing of the Board's final

recommendation with respect to their candidature. Recommendations of the Board are not subject to appeal. The Board does not release individual scores.

10. Staff members included in the roster will be assigned to posts according to the required language combinations as and when vacancies occur in the Terminology and Reference Section in the Documentation Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, for a mandatory trial period of two years. Staff members who are already at the G-6 or G-7 level will be assigned at their respective level. Others at a lower level will be granted a special post allowance at the G-6 level for the trial period. Staff members who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and by the Office of Human Resources Management will be promoted to the G-7 level. Staff members who do not successfully complete the trial period will be reassigned to posts at their previous level, and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

11. Staff members of the Secretariat who meet the conditions set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/1998/4 and the present information circular may apply for this examination by completing the attached form and submitting it, preferably by e-mail, together with a copy of their updated P.11 or Personal History Profile (PHP) form to the following office, **no later than Monday, 14 September 2009**:

2009 competitive examination for language reference assistants
Examinations and Tests Section
Strategic Planning and Staffing Division
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575 A
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y. 10017
Fax No.: 1-212-963-3683
**E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org**

Applications received after the above deadline will not be considered.

# Application

## 2009 competitive examination for language reference assistants

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax No. _____

E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s)? _____

What is your main language?[a] _____

**Please complete an up-to-date P.11 or PHP form and attach it to this application. Describe your educational background and work experience, giving dates and length of time. Also include any relevant computer software or programmes used.**

**Applications submitted without a P.11 or PHP form will NOT be considered.**

I have read information circular ST/IC/2009/27 and I understand that if I am successful in the 2009 competitive examination for language reference assistants and am recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as a language reference assistant will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraph 9 of the circular.

Date _____ Signature _____



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I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

*Notes*

[a] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the applicant is best able to work. Applicants' claims as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.